

CENTER SCENE



The Bureau of Land Management Service Center Newsletter

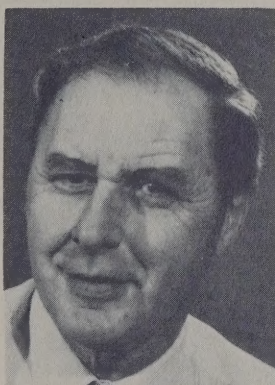
July 1991

A MESSAGE FROM MARV

The realignment of the Service Center organization, to bring it in line with decisions implementing the WO/SC Roles and Structures Study, is very near completion. Formal approval of some positions and related personnel actions is required from the WO. Approvals have been requested and I am confident they will be granted.

Changes in our work places or our personal lives can be positive or negative, but are nearly always disruptive to some degree. The anticipation of change is often worse than the actual event. The Service Center Management Team is very aware of these facts. In the realignment effort, we did our best to announce ahead of time what we intended to do, and when and how we intended to do it. We followed our announced plans very carefully, but some schedules slipped because we had underestimated the amount of work necessary to do the job right. I made the choice that doing the job right was more important than the calendar.

Several of you are going to new or different jobs; others were not affected. I



will be distributing a chart showing the new or changed organization arrangements. The chart will be annotated with the title, series, and grade of positions allocated to the revised organizational units. Later, our standard Table of Organization will show who has been assigned to what position, and which positions are vacant and subject to advertisement or filling through proper reassignments of

qualified personnel.

I appreciate the extra effort that a lot of Service Center people put forth to complete this task. I especially appreciate the professional, businesslike approach that Toni Fitzwater and the rest of the Union officials displayed throughout this process. I compliment them on the manner in which they represented employee interests.

We will move as quickly as possible to bring all realignment related activity to a close, so we can put it behind us and get on with the real business of the Service Center. That business is the performance of high quality work in completing our mission of service to the rest of the BLM.

EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHTS

Sandy Bowers, Branch Chief of the Bureau Library, has been elected to the advisory board of the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC). The board, called Users Council, advises OCLC, a nonprofit organization, on cataloging procedures and policies that affect over 7,000 libraries internationally. Sandy is one of five Federal representatives on the board. She will represent all Federal libraries, from the Library of Congress to small field operations. Her term of office is 3 years. Sandy previously sat on the Users Council from 1985 to 1987.

Kemp Conn, Acting Associate Service Center Director, has been awarded the Department of the Interior's Meritorious Service Award in recognition of his outstanding leadership and managerial expertise with BLM. Kemp was commended for continually exhibiting an outstanding grasp of complex natural resource issues and for being recognized as a leader who is constantly challenged to improve operations within the Bureau that have benefited employees and the public alike.

Gordon Jennings, Organizational Development Specialist at the Service Center, was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree on April 20, 1991, by the Union Institute of Cincinnati, Ohio.

PERSONNEL NEWS

New Employees:

Terry Baker, Realty Specialist,
SC-651
Lisa Drebenstedt, Office Automation
Clerk, SC-310
Barbara Frascello, Clerk-Typist,
SC-631
Richard Hagan, Landscape Architect,
SC-673

Separations:

Gloria Hildreth, Personnel Assistant,
SC-631
Sharon Keim, Voucher Examiner,
SC-616
Donald Mitchell, Electrical Engineer,
SC-673
Roland Payne, Labor Relations
Specialist, SC-630
Linda Rosen, Electrical Engineer,
SC-673

Federally Employed Women
22nd National Training
Conference
July 15-19, 1991
Currihan Hall, Denver, CO

Watch for information on the annual SC employee picnic!

CONFRONTING NATURE TO SAVE LIVES

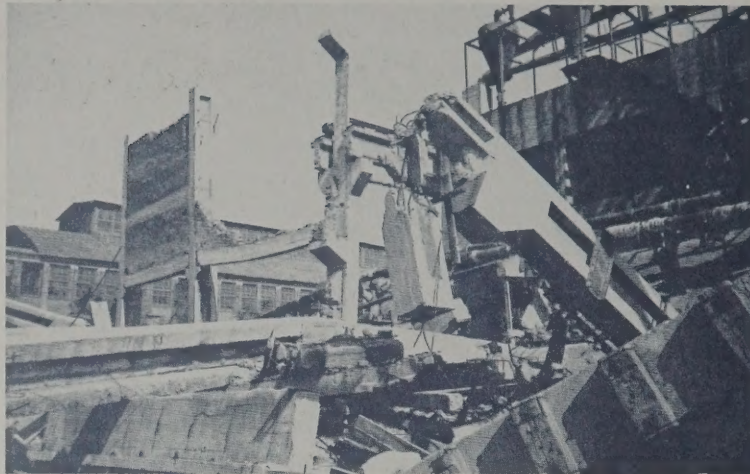
by Kathy Rohling

Part I— In the wake of the 1985 Mexico City earthquake and the 1988 quake in Armenia, emergency managers realized that the United States did not have the ability to adequately respond to similar catastrophes. In January 1990, a National Urban Search and Rescue Task Force Steering Committee was formed to help prepare the country for such an emergency. The Committee's task was twofold: to determine the management structure necessary to set up an emergency network; and to determine standards, training, and qualifications for individual search and rescue teams.

Dion Dishong, a civil engineering technician with the Branch of Engineering Services at BLM's Service Center, became involved in the search and rescue project because of his 27 years of experience (active and reserve) as a military engineer, his Incident Command System experience at fires, and his membership in the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME). Dion was asked by Colonel (Ret) Ed Rapp of the Colorado School of Mines to serve as a consultant for development of a field manual for the rescue teams. From that point on, Dion was "hooked." He is now a member of the Technical Subcommittee of the Colorado Urban Search and Rescue Task Force.

In addressing its task, the Committee had to consider the changing nature of today's rescue operations. The biggest change has been in this country's demographics—the population has moved from a rural to an urban setting with its attendant densely-packed, high-rise buildings. According to *Safety and Survival in an Earthquake* (USGS), "The actual movement of the ground...is seldom the direct cause of death or injury. Most casualties result from falling objects and debris because the shocks can shake, damage, or demolish buildings and other structures." In the 1985 Mexico City earthquake, one rescue worker described buildings 12-14 stories high that were pancaked to within 10-30 feet above ground. "Some," she says, "actually sank down into their basements."

Our present preparedness could be termed "piecemeal" at best. "The key is



*Structural damage from 1976 earthquake in China
(photo by R. E. Wallace, USGS).*

saving lives," explains Dion. "Mexico City proved that we weren't ready to handle a disaster of that magnitude. If there had been teams in place—already trained, outfitted, and ready to go, we could have saved more lives."

For maximum effectiveness and efficiency, rescue teams must be already organized, rapidly deployable, and self-sustaining for a minimum of 72 hours. A team must go in with virtually everything—food, medicine, and equipment—because one of the unknowns in a catastrophe is what, if any, support will be available upon arrival. As Dion says, "You are going into a devastated city. They are not going to be able to supply a whole lot of anything." Why 72 hours? Because that's the standard, maximum, realistic timeframe to save people who are buried. In any rescue, but particularly in an earthquake's aftermath, time is critical.

With this information in mind, the Steering Committee decided that initially the task force will consist of 25 teams with 58 members per team. The teams will be chosen by a competitive process with a target date for final selection in September 1991. The teams will have the manpower necessary to sustain a 24-hour, ongoing mission. They will also use already-existing resources. The primary resources—people, firefighters, dog teams, and most equipment—will be supplied at the State level.

Although State governments will be responsible for setting task force priorities at a disaster scene, the Committee chose the Federal Emergency Management Agency

(FEMA) to act in an oversight capacity—to coordinate the preplanning and preparedness activities, to coordinate the disaster assistance provided by all the other Federal agencies, and to disburse Federal funds that were appropriated for the project.

Pre-disaster planning and preparedness activities, according to Mary Ahlstrom of FEMA's Hazmat Program, consist of making "very detailed contingency plans" in reference to specific geographic locations. Dr. Marian L. Olson, Regional Director, FEMA Region VIII, cites Salt Lake City as an example. Salt

Lake has a water treatment plant built on the Wasatch Fault. The city itself is built on an old lake bed. If there is a quake, the city will probably need water because the water treatment plant will likely be destroyed. And, because of the subsidence of the lake bed, the airport may be underwater, making it impossible for airplanes to land. Consequently, supplies and rescue personnel would have to arrive at distant airports or by helicopter and 4-wheel drive vehicle. There is also the likelihood that medical facilities would be down or not fully operational.

A real life example occurred in the April 1991 earthquake in Costa Rica. According to the *Denver Post*, "Bridges and roads...were destroyed or damaged by the earthquake, making it difficult to assess the extent of deaths and damage. Neighboring Nicaragua sent helicopters to fly over areas cut off by landslides and road damage." In the city, two hotels, the customs house, and an office building collapsed. The hospital was also damaged and patients were treated in a tent set up in the street near the hospital.

If there were an upside to this, it would be that in the Salt Lake City scenario a quake along the Wasatch Fault would destroy the Pineview Dam in Ogden. If the Pineview Dam goes, downstream the IRS Service Center will be inundated. This could be fortunate or unfortunate, depending upon one's point of view as a taxpayer.

See next month's issue of Center Scene for Part II of this story, which will describe specific aspects to be addressed by each unit of the National Urban Search and Rescue Task Force.